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ABSTRACT

The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities brought together a total of 61 educators, employers, helping professionals, people with learning disabilities, family members, and government policy leaders in a conference designed to identify issues and develop a strategic plan to improve employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities. The 61 delegates worked in both constituency groups and topic groups to brainstorm, clarify issues, and develop recommendations. This report provides transcripts of two introductory speeches: "The Problem, The Future, The Challenge: The Issue of Employability for Persons with Learning Disabilities" (Paul Gerber) and "Pathways to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities: The Process" (Dale Brown). The report then offers recommendations from the following topic groups: work preparation, vocational entry, reasonable accommodation, job advancement, socioadaptability, policy and legislation, attitudes, and definition and diagnosis. Responses of a panel, composed primarily of advocates for disability interests on key Congressional staffs, are then highlighted. The following needs were drawn out from the recommendations: increased public awareness, interagency cooperation, stronger national leadership, outreach to employers, transition services from school to work, and individual responsibility. Appendices provide: the agenda; topic papers used to initiate group discussion; work sheets used in brainstorming, prioritizing, and developing recommendations; the scheme used in identifying potential delegates; a planning committee list; and a participants list. (JDD)

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PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

A Plan for Action

Recommendations of a consensus-building conference

April 30 and May 1, 1990

Washington, D.C.

held as a preconference of the Annual Meeting of the

President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

EC 301205

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PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

A National Strategic Plan From The Delegates to the Pathways to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities

Prepared and written by

Dale S. Brown
Paul J. Gerber, Ph.D.
Carol Dowdy, Ed.D.

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A PLAN FOR ACTION

Recommendations of a consensus-building conference held April 30 and May 1, 1990, as a preconference of the Annual Meeting of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

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Pathways to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thanks to all of the Conference participants whose input made up the content of this report.

A special thanks to the George Washington University Department of Teacher Preparation and Special Education who provided several of the facilitators and recorders for the conference.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

Pathways to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities

The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities brought together 61 educators, employers, helping professionals, people with learning disabilities, family members, and policy officials from government who were national leaders in a conference designed to identify issues and develop a strategic plan to improve employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities. This conference, entitled "Pathways to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities," was held on April 30 and May 1, 1990, as a preconference of the Annual Meeting of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

The 61 delegates worked in both constituency groups and topic groups through a structured process which involved brainstorming, clarifying issues, then developing recommendations. The report includes detailed recommendations from the following topic groups: work preparation, vocational entry, reasonable accommodation, job advancement, socioadaptability, policy and legislation, attitudes, and definition and diagnosis. The following needs were drawn out from the recommendations:

Increased public awareness -- Half of the topic groups made recommendations to increase the awareness of general and specific publics regarding learning disabilities. Employers, people with learning disabilities, and helping professionals were particularly mentioned. Specific ideas included a multimedia training package, a national clearinghouse, a national awareness day, and a national town hall meeting.

Cooperation among agencies that impact on people with learning disabilities needs to become significantly stronger, as does cooperation among all of the non-government groups involved in employment of people with learning disabilities. This came through in calls for interagency linkages, for cross-training, and for agreement on the definition of "learning disabilities." Most of the recommended strategies requested cooperation from varying constituencies, agencies, and/or professionals.

Stronger national leadership was requested by most of the topic groups. The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities was asked to bring together task forces to (a) develop a multimedia training package, (b) specify gaps in transition services for people with learning disabilities, and (c) educate employers about learning disabilities. In addition, the "Work Preparation" topic group suggested that a Presidential Task Force address attitudinal barriers that prevent people with learning disabilities from reaching their full potential.

Outreach to employers was an important issue. Employers need training and assistance on accommodating the needs of people with learning disabilities at entry level and promotion. In addition, service providers need to ensure that their programs meet the real needs of employers. And people with learning disabilities need to ensure that their job search behaviors meet the needs of their employers.

Transition from school to work needs to be improved. First, the inclusion of people with learning disabilities needs to be clarified. People with learning disabilities should be exposed to career information and decision-making throughout their school experience. Other service gaps should be addressed.

The responsibility of the person with a learning disability himself or herself was emphasized. Even if all of the recommendations of the "Pathways to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities" were implemented, it would still be up to the individual to locate a job, develop social skills, and use available resources in a self-directed way.

At the end of the conference, when the delegates presented their recommendations to a VIP panel, congressional staff pointed out the importance of grass-roots advocacy to obtain public policies which support these recommendations.

INTRODUCTORY SPEECHES

THE PROBLEM, THE FUTURE, THE CHALLENGE: THE ISSUE OF EMPLOYABILITY FOR PERSONS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Paul J. Gerber, Ph.D.
Conference Chairperson

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps it is most fitting to begin this conference of distinguished people with a quote from a well-known person on the American scene today. Many years ago, when Yogi Berra was called on to make a few comments at Yogi Berra Day at Yankee Stadium, he began by saying, "I want to thank everyone who made this day necessary." So, too, we can say that for this conference.

Much has happened in past years to bring us together to this Pathways Conference for Persons with Learning Disabilities. Substantial progress has been made in the schools in the 1970s and 1980s. Legislation has opened doors and created opportunities that were only wishful thinking 20 years ago. Those who made this necessary (if you will) were professionals, parents, advocacy groups, and persons with learning disabilities. All of them were progressive folks who were sensitive to the issues and advocated for rights in order to enable disabled persons to reach independence.

But we are in a new era now, where the shift in disability policy has gone "from paternalistic maintenance to civil rights and investments in independence and productivity" (as described by the President's Committee). Therefore, for the foreseeable future, the focus will be a continuum of productivity-oriented services to foster independent and productive lives for persons with learning disabilities.

That is why we are here today, and that is why at this conference, it is necessary to refer back to Yogi Berra. But before we start, I would like to take some time to speak about the problems, the future, and the challenge that face us on the issue of employability and learning disabilities.

THE PROBLEM

In order to put the problem of disability and employability in perspective, it is important to keep in mind that we are speaking about a learning-disabilities population that was 56% of the handicapped school population in school year 1987-1988. There is no question that learning disabilities comprise a high-incidence disability. Each year thousands of students with learning disabilities leave school and enter the job market. Others find the world of work to be fraught with frustrations, barriers, and problems. When there are problems, there are awesome costs associated with disability.

For instance:

1. The cost of disability in the national economic mix is estimated at $300 billion a year and it is going up. The United States Department of Labor estimates that excluding two-thirds of Americans with disabilities from the work force costs the country that much in direct payments, lost taxes, and productivity. A recently drafted federal report states, "If demographers are correct in the rapid growth projection of disabled persons, and if policies continue, the costs of disability will become a crushing economic burden" on the country.

2. People with disabilities are a rapidly expanding segment of the general population. Yet, if one compares those with disabilities employed in 1970 and in 1988, there is a drop of 8 percent of those employed. This, of course, is of great concern. To quote a report written by the President's Committee, "43 million Americans with disabilities remain the nation's most isolated unemployed, impoverished, and welfare-dependent minority which is losing ground."

3. Stanford Research Institute, which is conducting the National Longitudinal Transition Study, has found that the learning-disabled population is gaining increasing numbers of Black and Hispanic persons. A growing number of households that students with learning disabilities come from have annual incomes of under $25,000. Certainly, learning disabilities cannot be deemed simply a middle-class phenomenon any longer.

4. Moreover, the Stanford Research group has reported that dropping out of school is a serious problem in the learning-disabilities population. Thirty-two percent of students with learning disabilities left school in 1985-1986 and 1986-1987 voluntarily, without graduating. In addition, the United States Department of Education and the Center for Educational Statistics reports that 62% of students with learning disabilities graduated in 1985-1986, compared with 74% of the general school population.

5. Technology, which is the hallmark of our post-industrial society, has increased productivity. At the same time, as the nature of work has changed, it also has excluded individuals from the workplace. We

must be reminded that technology has aided disabled persons with their work, but it has put others at risk, including learning-disabled persons, in this technology age.

THE FUTURE

As we devise a consensus for employability for persons with learning disabilities at this conference, it is most important to keep in mind that we are not thinking only about one or two years in the future, but to the year 2000 and beyond. Indeed, the future holds great promise and numerous surprises for all of us. The learning-disabilities population is no exception. But what will the future look like for persons with disabilities, and how will they fare in this rapidly changing world -- especially the world of work? This is what future forecasters and, most prominently, Dr. Marvin Cetron are saying:

1. Persons in the work force will need to know the technology of a technological world.
2. There will be increased competition in the product, service, and labor markets.
3. U.S. manufacturing employment will decline while services grow. Until the year 2000, raised productivity levels will be the goal -- especially in the service sector.
4. In the 1990s, workers will lose jobs to technology, and if they are not amenable to retraining, they will constantly be bumped from the work force. Furthermore, they will not be able to remedy their situation by moving to another geographical area as was the case in the 1980s.

5. Greater opportunities will exist for women, minorities, and disabled persons because of labor shortages. But they will have to be well-trained and perform well. Also speaking of minorities, by the year 2000, the Census Bureau projects that 58% of the nation's cities will have a majority of minority students in their schools.

6. Of all the jobs in the year 2000, more than one-half will require some education beyond high school. One-third will be filled by college graduates. Today 22% of occupations in this country require a college degree.

7. Overall job growth will be weighted to higher-skilled occupations, but large numbers of jobs will be created in medium- to low-skilled fields as well. Wages will be commensurate with job levels.

8. Futurist Dr. Marvin Cetron sums things up well --- "For individuals, the good jobs of the future will belong to those who have skills that enable them to be productive in a high-skill, service economy. The central theme will be enhancement of productivity.

9. Most important, are the skills projected to be important by the business community for the future work force? The source of this information is the National Academy of Science's <u>High Schools and the Changing Workplace</u>. While I read these items, please keep in mind the nature and needs of persons with learning disabilities in the workplace. They will have to:

    *identify problems,

    *consider and evaluate possible solutions, weighing their risks and benefits,

*formulate and reach decisions logically,

*separate fact from opinion,

*adjust to unanticipated situations by applying established rules and facts,

*work out new ways of handling recurring problems,

*determine what is needed to accomplish work assignments,

*verify information and evaluate the worth and objectivity of sources, and

*interpret quantitative information as, for example, in tables, charts, and graphs.

Naturally, there is an implicit notion present here, and that is mastery of basic academic skills. More can be said, but let these future forecasts suffice.

THE CHALLENGE

President Bush placed the issue of disability as one of the top priorities on his domestic agenda. He has "pledged to do whatever it takes to make sure that disabled persons are included in the mainstream." His strong support of the Americans With Disabilities Act is indicative of his commitment. He also is incisive in his observation that employment is key to mainstream functioning.

Our job at this conference is to lay the groundwork so that persons with learning disabilities are able to live more productive lives. And the benefits are numerous. There are long-term economic benefits which can result in having a rich and meaningful quality of life. Most important, there are untold benefits when one is able to aspire and reach his/her personal potential.

This conference is not about neurobiology, sub-types, cognitive achievement batteries, or instructional strategies. It is about a goal of no less than full employment for persons with learning disabilities. It is a consensus conference that should begin to forge a national policy on employability in the area of learning disabilities. So it is important that in the next two days you remove the barriers, create the linkages, develop the systems, facilitate the access, announce the initiatives, and provide for the field more than just hope -- a plan for action.

As the conference progresses, please remember that you are here in an advocacy role and that you can make a difference --- a big difference. So then, accept the challenge and empower yourselves. Most important, take this opportunity to be ambitious in your ideas and your plans. THANK YOU.

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PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

THE PROCESS

Dale Brown
Conference Program Manager

Introduction and Welcome

The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities would like to welcome you to Pathways to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities. Your support of employment of people with learning disabilities means a lot to us, and we are glad that you are here today.

A special welcome from Justin Dart, Chair of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, and Jay Rochlin, its Executive Director. They asked me to be sure to tell you how much they support your activities today, and that they are eagerly awaiting the results of this report to shape our policy in the area of employment of people with learning disabilities.

History of Pathways to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities

My goal for this speech is to describe how all of us in this room are going to develop a strategic plan for maximizing the employment of people with learning disabilities.

But before doing that, I'd like to take a moment to give you the history of the "Pathways to Employment" effort of the President's Committee. One of our agency roles is to bring people together from different fields in order to develop consensus on various aspects of policy. This format achieves this purpose.

The first "Pathways to Employment" was held in 1979 as a project of our Youth Development Committee. The goal of this meeting was to develop a blueprint of action for transition from school to work. It was a major success and was repeated in 1981. Then we took it "on the road" and held meetings in local areas. We have held 46 Pathways in cities and states across the country, bringing together various constituencies to plan transition.

Next, our Employment Preparation Committee modified the model to apply to adults as well as young people. A conference was held at our Annual Meeting in Tampa in 1989. Many of you attended that meeting, and we have held some local meetings using the adult model.

Last year, the Learning Disabilities Association of America and the National Network of Learning Disabled Adults asked the President's Committee to consider applying this model to a single disability--learning disabilities. The President's Committee added it to the 1989 and 1990 Work Plan, and last year Paul Gerber graciously agreed to chair the planning committee. The planning committee members are Susan Vogel, Nancy Blackmore, Mike Tita, Helene Gruber, Wilson Anderson, and Carol Dowdy. They have been deeply involved in the agenda planning and are willing to assist you.

Composition of Delegates and Assignment

This presentation will describe how all of us will work together to write a strategic planning document. All of you were chosen as national leaders in one or more constituency. We have included educators from adult, regular, special, postsecondary, and secondary education. We have also included education administrators and university professors. We have employers, vocational rehabilitators, helping professionals, adults with learning disabilities, family

members, and policy officials from government. This is an invitational conference, and we wanted to invite the most representative people and the major leaders.

You have been assigned to two groups -- a constituency group and a multidisciplinary team. Each multidisciplinary team has a topic. You are assigned to develop the section of the strategic plan for that particular topic. We have tried to follow your preferences wherever possible. However, in some cases we have had to assign you to a team. You will be representing your constituency group during the deliberations of the multidisciplinary team. For that reason, we have two meetings of your constituency so you can gather input from other members of your constituency. The constituencies are postsecondary educators, educators, employers, helping professionals, adults with learning disabilities, family members, and policy officials.

You have been assigned a topic. The topics have been changed slightly since you received your packet in the mail. We had to tighten up the number of topics and make some combinations. They are work preparation, vocational entry, reasonable accommodation, job advancement, socioadaptability, policy and legislation, attitudes, and definition and diagnosis.

Overview of Pathways to Employment of People with Learning Disabilities

The two major subdivisions of the meeting are issue identification and strategic planning.

Our first job, which will occur throughout the day, will be to identify the issues that impact on the employment of people with learning disabilities. An issue is defined as a factor that can enhance or impede the employment of people with learning disabilities. We will begin with brainstorming as many issues as possible

and end up with a prioritized, specific list of issues. Although you will be in one topical group, you will have the opportunity to respond to all of the topics.

Tomorrow, we will develop a strategic plan for our highest priority issues. We will define what should be done, how it should be done, who should do it, and by when it should be done. We hope that as you work on the national plan you are also thinking about what you can do. During the last part of the conference, you will be presenting your plan to a panel of policy makers, advocacy group leaders, and an industry representative. They are people who can actually make the changes we are talking about here.

Step by Step Description of Issue Identification Process

Before we go on, I would like to make a general comment about conference procedures and processes. It is crucial that each of you participate. Each of you has been chosen to represent a particular constituency because you are a person with a particular expertise. And we have assigned you accordingly. So, we would like to ask that the participation be as equal as possible--that those of you who are shy make it a point to participate more and that those of you who might tend to over-participate assist us in drawing out the participation of others.

I would now like to review the issue-identification process and strategic-planning process step by step, day by day. Trained facilitators will be available to help you with each activity and will answer any questions that you may have by the end of the day. Please take out your agenda (Appendix A) and worksheets (Appendix C).

Right now, you are at a table with your constituency group. The first task (Task 1) from 9:30 A.M. to 10:30 A.M. will be to brainstorm issues on employment of people with learning disabilities from the point of view of your constituencies. We

ask that you cover the gamut and be creative. Please work as individuals first for fifteen minutes, and then each speak on your ideas. Take notes on your colleagues' thinking, because you will go back to your multidisciplinary team representing your constituency. Your facilitator will help you organize your time so that each of you is able to speak.

Afterwards you get a break, and we will ask you to move to your multidisciplinary team which has been assigned a topic. Task 2 will occur between 10:40 A.M. and 11:40 A.M. We would like for you to brainstorm issues for each topic. Again, an issue is defined as a factor that can enhance or impede the employment of people with learning disabilities. Please be creative! Remember to put all ideas down on the flip charts in the beginning of the process. Toward the end of the time, each group will begin to consolidate its issues.

Then we will ask you to work as individuals from 11:40 A.M. to 12:10 P.M. (Task 3). We want your input on all of the topics, and we will ask you to write issues and potential solutions for each topic. During lunch, we will deliver to your table the issues that were written by the other groups on your topic. This way we get the input from all of the people on all of the topics.

After lunch, an hour and a half (1:30 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.) is devoted to finalizing and ranking the issues (Task 4). First, review all of the issues that you received from the other groups. Respond to these issues by either developing a new issue, combining them with one of your issues, or choosing not to use the issue. Then each issue will be finalized and made into clear statements.

The issues will be written in the report from what you write. So please try to clarify them so that a person who is not in your group can understand. Each issue should be as distinct as possible from the other issues. Then the issues should be

placed in priority order. We want you to begin to think about "trigger mechanisms" at this point. Is there one thing that has to be resolved before all of the issues can be resolved? Is there a key issue that must be developed?

You will then get a break of ten minutes. From 3:40 P.M.- 4:10 P.M., meet in your constituency groups (Task 5). Each of you should request feedback from your group on possible strategies for your highest priority issue from the point of view of your constituency. If you have time, do a round of second priorities. You will be bringing that information back to your multidisciplinary team. Paul and I will then make some closing remarks to you as we ask you to spend the evening thinking about tomorrow's challenge, which will be developing the actual plan. At 4:30, we must leave this room, because the hotel is setting up for a reception. So we have a strict deadline that must be followed.

Step -by -Step Description of Strategic Planning

Tomorrow, Tuesday, May 1, will be devoted to developing the actual plan for improving employment for people with learning disabilities. We will meet bright and early at 8:30 A.M. for multidisciplinary team meetings, which will last until 10:15. At that point, we want you to develop an action plan for each of the items. Please be specific. We want to know who will do it, what should be done, and how it should be done. Your priorities and action plans will make up the report and are the culmination of Pathways to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities.

At 10:15, each group should select a spokesperson who will give a report to a VIP panel at the end of the conference. The VIP panel will consist of legislators, advocacy group leaders and a representative of IBM corporation. These VIPs can assist us in implementing our recommendations.

A report will be given based on your documentation of the action plan. It will be minutes of the meeting. The report will be sent to each of you and be widely distributed. A summary will be published in LD Focus and a rehabilitation journal. We will disseminate all information widely.

Your input is very important to the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. I look forward to the conference.

REPORT OF THE DELEGATES OF PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

REPORT OF THE DELEGATES OF

PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

A NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING DOCUMENT

Introduction

A meeting of national experts in the field of learning disabilities was held all day April 30, 1990, and the morning of May 1, 1990, to develop a plan for maximizing the employment of people who have learning disabilities. The meeting was held as a preconference of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities Annual Meeting, which was held May 2-4, 1990.

Sixty-one delegates met. They had been selected as top leaders from the constituencies most involved in assisting people with learning disabilities to join the work force. The constituencies included representatives from postsecondary education, employers, educators, helping professionals, adults with learning disabilities, family members of adults with learning disabilities, and policy officials.

The conference participants were divided into multidisciplinary teams, with an effort made to include at least one person from each constituency. That way, their recommendations can truly be considered a consensus from those in the field of learning disabilities. What follows are the statements of concern developed by the "Pathways to Employment" participants.

Each multidisciplinary team was asked to brainstorm issues, prioritize them, and develop an action plan for each high-priority issue. This report serves as minutes of the meeting. Issues and action plans are written as developed by

participants and no effort is made to analyze them. They fall within eight topical headings:

1. Work Preparation
2. Vocational Entry
3. Reasonable Accommodation
4. Job Advancement
5. Socioadaptability
6. Policy and Legislation
7. Attitudes
8. Definition and Diagnosis

1. **Work Preparation**

The topic of work preparation included the many activities and programs which assist people with learning disabilities to become qualified for today's jobs. Education and training programs included high schools, colleges, (both two-year and four-year), professional and paraprofessional training, apprenticeships, trade schools, vocational schools, adult education, and training in the military. The rehabilitation programs reviewed included the Job Training Partnership Act programs and supported employment. Moreover, transition from school to work was covered, including case management, job placement, and interagency linkages. Issues and action plans are as follows:

A. Develop and implement a public awareness campaign for adults with learning disabilities. The campaign should be targeted toward specific constituencies, such as business leaders; labor, military, and professional organizations; and advocacy and consumer groups.

B. Teachers and students should be targeted for disability awareness training. The teachers should work in technical training schools, colleges, universities, and professional schools. Both regular- and special-education students from K-12 should receive this training. Among the people responsible for developing and implementing this training are educators, people with learning disabilities, consumer and advocacy groups, and publishers of educational materials. They must identify sources of funding for pilot programs in order to develop model curricula for local education agencies and, in addition, find funds to support training programs for administration, faculty, and staff in postsecondary settings. The program developed by the Association on Handicapped Student Service Programs in Post-Secondary Education (AHSSPPE) would be an example of the type of program that can be used in postsecondary settings.

C. Establish a Presidential Task Force to address the myths, fears, lack of understanding, and other barriers which prevent people with learning disabilities from reaching their full potential. The task force should include people with learning disabilities, their families, and representatives of professions including vocational rehabilitation, social work, psychology, medicine, and law.

2. <u>Vocational Entry</u>

This topic covered the process of job-matching from two points of view: (1) the applicant with a learning disability; and (2) the employer attempting to hire the most qualified candidate for each position. Issues covered from the point of view of the applicant included educational preparation needed for effective job

seeking, filling out application forms, job interviews, and final selection. Issues covered from the employer's point of view included job analysis, non-discrimination, and financial incentives and disincentives. Service provision to people with learning disabilities was reviewed to determine if vocational entry needs were met. Issues and action plans are as follows:

A. Comprehensive vocational assessments should be available to all people with learning disabilities. An interdisciplinary team, which includes but is not limited to a psychologist and a vocational evaluator, would perform a comprehensive, functionally based evaluation. This assessment would include academic skills, cognitive processes, speech and language abilities, balance and coordination, psychosocial skills, and vocational evaluation. The vocational evaluation would include career interests, job readiness, and career aptitudes. Vocational assessment reports should be written toward inclusion, not exclusion. By 1994, it is hoped that state departments of education would make assessments available through schools. Adult agencies, such as vocational rehabilitation and the Job Training Partnership Act agency, would make them available through local offices.

B. Mandate transition planning for students with learning disabilities by 1994 in order to focus education toward one or several vocational outcomes. Vocational educators and guidance counselors should be trained regarding the needs of the working world, and how people with learning disabilities need to be trained to meet these needs. Coordination among secondary education, the state education agency,

vocational rehabilitation, and adult education is essential for this to be achieved.

C. Special and regular education teachers K-12 should use a case management approach. This could prevent many vocational problems. Individual education programs (IEPs) should be carefully planned to assure that appropriate skills are developed. Regular- and special-education teachers will need to be trained in this approach.

3. **Reasonable Accommodation**

The topic of reasonable accommodation covered ways of accommodating people with learning disabilities in the work force and how accommodation strategies could be improved and augmented. Environmental and workload accommodations were included. The employment process was thoroughly reviewed, including job application of new employees, daily work, workload balancing, performance appraisal, and training. The following issues came up:

A. Develop a multimedia training package to increase understanding of learning disabilities, how they impact on the individual, and the accommodations needed both on the job and in the application process. Individuals with learning disabilities, educators, co-workers, supervisors, and personnel directors should be major target audiences of this package. To begin the process of development, the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities should bring together advocacy groups including members of the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities and the National Association for Protection and Advocacy Systems. The training package should include an explanation of what learning disabilities are and how they

impact on the work setting. Also included should be an explanation of reasonable accommodation according to the laws and specific accommodations in the following areas: application forms, interviews, pre-employment testing, task analysis, environment, performance appraisal, and supervision. After the training package is developed, it will be presented through a "train the trainers" model. The training package will be presented to people with learning disabilities, their family members, secondary and postsecondary educators, counselors, employers, co-workers, supervisors, personnel directors, and rehabilitation staff, as well as other people interested in the employment of people with learning disabilities.

B. Compile relevant and essential research and disseminate a document which discusses funding sources and resources for providing accommodations in testing, training, placement, and employment of people with learning disabilities. There is a particular need for information on funding technology-based accommodations. The President's Committee should locate funding for the group by August 1990, call the group together by February 1991, and complete the document by November 1991. Dissemination should be completed by May 1992.

C. The term "reasonable accommodation" needs to be clarified, particularly in how it applies to "learning disabilities." Advocacy groups, in conjunction with the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, should work with policy

officials to develop options on how "reasonable accommodation" applies to people with learning disabilities.

4. **Job Advancement**

The topic of job advancement covered the process of moving from one job to another from the point of view of both the applicant with a learning disability and the employer. Issues discussed included training needs, requisite social skills, marketing one's work abilities, and effective use of time management. Issues and action plans were as follows:

A. Expose students with learning disabilities to various work environments throughout the educational process to help them develop empowerment skills. Education and training of individuals with learning disabilities represent the foundation necessary for job advancement. This curricular modification is a change in focus that will require the individual and collective efforts of parents, schools, postsecondary personnel, employers, educators, and human-service personnel.

B. Implement a research program to develop a curriculum which will increase job-advancement skills among people with learning disabilities. First, between 1990 and 1993, research is needed to develop a range of programs for people with learning disabilities at various skills covering an initial job placement, vocational entry, critical transition points, and long-term career planning. Model programs should be developed and evaluated, and information should be disseminated between 1993 and 1995. Afterwards, programs should be evaluated to determine their effectiveness.

C. A strong self-image on the part of the employee with a learning disability is a critical need for successful job advancement and success in managing his or her life. People with learning disabilities need to evaluate themselves and develop their skills in areas such as self-advocacy, flexibility, independence, negotiation, and motivation. Counselors, teachers, and employers can support development of these skills.

D. Employers need to understand and respond to the particular job advancement needs of people with learning disabilities. Self-disclosure should be encouraged in the employment setting. Risks and implications should also be realized. People with learning disabilities may be willing to identify themselves if the employer establishes a track record of providing reasonable accommodation, upgrading adaptive devices, and providing ongoing support for people with learning disabilities.

E. Employers should clearly communicate the job advancement skills needed for job promotion to educators and school administrators. This could occur through business personnel teaching students with learning disabilities or participating in in-service training sessions for school personnel.

5. **Socioadaptability**

The topic of socioadaptability covered the relationship between the person with a learning disability and the other people within their social network. The discussion included such issues such as personal responsibility of the person with

learning disabilities, social skills, and the effect of the learning disability on adolescent and adult development. Issues and action plans are as follows:

A. People with learning disabilities and other people in their social network must develop greater awareness of the effect of various types of learning disabilities on the individual's performance in social settings, school, and in employment settings. For example, social competence is often affected. Also, as job demands or family conditions (i.e., divorce) change, the person with a learning disability needs to develop different ways of coping with the disability. Consequently, these changes cause stress. Sensitivity on the part of school personnel, supervisors, mental health professionals, and others in the social network is extremely helpful to the person with a learning disability.

The conference participants felt that wide dissemination of this report and continued involvement of the subgroup were essential to the implementation of the plan for increasing socioadaptability among adults with learning disabilities.

To increase general awareness, members of learning-disabilities organizations designated by their leaders will make themselves available for technical assistance and consultation to groups that can impact specific segments of the general public. Mr. Wilson Anderson, President of the National Orton Dyslexia Society, will coordinate a meeting of both groups on October 31, 1991, during the national Orton Dyslexia Society (ODS) meeting in Washington, D.C. Organizations involving learning disabilities include: the National Center for

Learning Disabilities (NCLD), the Association on Handicapped Student Service Programs in Post-Secondary Education (AHSSPPE), the Orton Dyslexia Society (ODS), the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDE), the Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD), Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD), and the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). The organizations which can have an impact on specific segments of the general public include the Chambers of Commerce, the National Alliance of Business, the National Association of Social Work, the National Association of School Psychologists, the National Association of Adult Educators, the American Corrections Association, the American Association of Counseling and Development, and Divisions 15, 16, 17, and 32 of the American Psychological Association.

B. The social competence of adults with learning disabilities must be assessed within the context of the workplace. Recognition must be developed that many people with learning disabilities do not know that they have problems with social functioning, and neither do other people in the workplace. The assessment should involve both the abilities of the employees and the sensitivity of their co-workers and bosses. Also, employee assistance counselors need information on effective interventions in a work setting. An effective curriculum for social competence also needs to be developed. The curriculum should be usable in many training settings, including high schools and rehabilitation settings as well as the workplace. The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities should request

funds for research and development for strategies assessment, a proposed curriculum, and effective interventions. Possible funding sources include the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Labor, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services.

6. **Policy and Legislation**

The topical area of policy and legislation included a review of legislative mandates affecting the area of disability, including legislation already in effect, and legislation which is anticipated. Particular attention was paid to the legislation and regulations of the Carl Perkins Act, the Job Training Partnership Act, the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, the Education of the Handicapped Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Delegates agreed that aggressive lobbying effort would be needed in order to establish the recommended legislative initiatives. Issues and plans for this topical area follow:

A. An agreed-upon definition of learning disabilities is needed in order to update legislation and develop core eligibility criteria. Increased efforts should be made to develop consensus around the revised definition of the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities submitted to Congress in August 1987. The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation should be asked to endorse this definition. If it is endorsed, they should establish standardized core criteria based on the definition.

B. Improved legislation and subsequent initiatives are needed in the area of transition. Service criteria should be broadened to include certain

categories of individuals not covered under present legislation, such as people with learning disabilities with concomitant disabilities. Transitional skills need to be taught earlier, and infused throughout secondary education. Vocational rehabilitation follow-up should occur in short-term rather than long-term projects. The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities should form a task force which includes the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, the U.S. Department of Education, and professional learning-disabilities organizations. The task force should specify gaps in current services for adults age 22 or older and locate existing funds or appropriate new funds to find ways to cover these gaps. People with learning disabilities need services to implement their employment-related long-term goals.

C. Employers need assistance on implementing legislation and information on legal mandates, responsibilities, and financial incentives for employment. Federal and state legislatures, professional organizations, and the Chamber of Commerce must assist employers in developing policies and practices regarding accommodations.

D. The various disciplines involved with learning disabilities need cross-training (training in each other's areas). Legislation needs to support interagency cooperation and funding should be appropriated to achieve that goal. Training should be both in-service and preservice.

7. **Attitudes**

The topic of attitudes covered awareness and knowledge about learning disabilities. Particularly emphasized were the attitudes of those people who have the potential to assist people with learning disabilities to find employment and become successful in achieving their work objectives. This included the attitudes of educators, employers, vocational rehabilitation personnel, and families of people with learning disabilities. Both the attitudes toward disabilities in general and the attitudes toward people with learning disabilities were included.

A. The team felt that the key issue was widespread ignorance about learning disabilities. Only when employers, co-workers, and employees with learning disabilities became better informed would people with learning disabilities advance in the work force. The team recommended that the President's Committee convene a task force of employers, small- and large-business representatives, unions, and advocacy groups to educate employers and workers about learning disabilities by October 1990. The task force could consider the following projects for educating employers and co-workers: 1) convening a conference of employers and people with learning disabilities, 2) a national town hall meeting on the employment of people with learning disabilities, 3) the generation and distribution of printed materials, tapes, and films, 4) the generation and distribution of public-service advertisements, and 5) a national awareness day including a media blitz, a celebration of employees with learning disabilities, and a "coming out" drive which would encourage self-disclosure and raise awareness of the fact that people with learning disabilities are

succeeding in the work force and are good employees. It is recommended that the task force use existing resources to fund and execute these projects, including the strong organizational and financial resources of the business community.

B. Helping professionals also need to be better informed on learning disabilities. The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities should be requested to discuss promoting awareness among helping professionals at one of their meetings.

C. People with learning disabilities also need better information regarding their own learning disabilities and those of others. Also, they may not have been empowered to be independent due to misinformation they received about their learning disabilities. Because it is not socially acceptable to acknowledge learning disabilities, they sometimes find it difficult to ask for the information and advice they might need. It is requested that the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDAA) develop a plan to assist people with learning disabilities to understand their disabilities. The LDAA should also contact the National Association of Secondary School Principals to explore with them setting up school-based support groups by February 1991.

8. **Definition and Diagnosis**

The topic "definition and diagnosis" covered all difficulties in the process of validating that a person has a learning disability in the process of gaining 1) eligibility to service programs or 2) gaining reasonable accommodation in education programs or during employment. Service delivery systems to be surveyed could include

secondary and postsecondary education programs, JTPA, vocational rehabilitation, services for people with blindness, and adult education.

The group felt that Congress and the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities should take the initiative in resolving this issue. Issues and plans for this area were:

A. Research is necessary to identify adults with learning disabilities and their needs specific to employment issues. Adequate diagnostic tools should be developed, which include all learning disabilities subtypes. These diagnostic tools should be usable at work, at school, and in social settings. The interplay between learning disabilities and other disabling conditions such as chemical dependency, spinal cord injury, and mental illness should be explored. Research on causes and intervention should be continued to expand the knowledge and practice base. The President's Committee should request that Congress appropriate funds for this research through the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, the National Institutes of Health, and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. The President's Committee could also raise money from other private organizations should Congressional appropriations be inadequate.

B. A national clearinghouse must be developed which disseminates information about people with learning disabilities. The President's Committee should request that Congress appropriate funds for this clearinghouse through the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, National Institutes of Health, and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. The President's

Committee could also raise money from other private organizations should Congressional appropriations be inadequate.

C. Diagnosis of learning disabilities should be broadened to allow for a comprehensive evaluation process which results in appropriate employment, accommodation, and advancement. The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services should create a task force to develop a position paper or "white paper" on the issue of diagnosis in adults. The task force should include representatives from the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Office of Special Education Programs, businesses (particularly human-resource directors), the American Psychological Association, the Society for Human Resource Management, the Learning Disabilities Association of America, the Orton Dyslexia Society, the National Association of Developmental Education, the International Reading Association, and the Council for Exceptional Children.

D. Criteria should be developed, and helping professionals, such as teachers and medical staff, should be trained to recognize learning disabilities. The Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, and other professional organizations should form a task force and/or focus groups to develop formalized preservice and in-service training with certification standards for completion. The training programs, which should include methods, materials, and best practices, should be disseminated through national clearinghouses, symposia, seminars, and proceedings. This should begin immediately.

RESPONSE OF VIP PANEL

VIP PANEL LIST

Moderated by:

Dr. Paul Gerber
Chairperson
Pathways to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities
Professor of Special Education and Psychiatry
Virginia Commonwealth University

VIP Panel Members:

Wilson Anderson
President
Orton Society

Dale Brown
Program Manager
Pathways to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities

Maria Cuprill
Staff Director
Subcommittee on Select Education
U.S. House of Representatives

Helene Gruber
Past-President
Learning Disabilities Association of America

Christine Lord
Professional Staff
Labor and Human Resources Committee
U.S. Senate

Dr. Pat Morrissey
Professional Staff
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives

Robert Silverstein
Staff Director
Subcommittee on Disability Policy
Labor and Human Resources Committee
U.S. Senate

John Steger
Program Manager
IBM Corporation

Judy Wagner
Legislative Assistant
Senator Paul Simon

Maureen West
Legislative Assistant
Senator Bob Dole

REPORT ON RESPONSES FROM VIP PANEL

PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

The VIP panel, moderated by Dr. Paul J. Gerber, listened to members of each work group give their reports. Most of the panel members were chosen to represent advocates for disability interests on key congressional staffs (Maria Cuprill, Christine Lord, Dr. Pat Morrissey, Robert Silverstein, Judy Wagner, and Maureen West). Two people, Wilson Anderson and Helene Gruber, were presidents of national advocacy groups for people with learning disabilities. And John Steger represented the employer interest. Dale Brown, Program Manager, represented the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

Several people had been invited to join the VIP panel but were unable to attend. Michael Tita, from 3-M Corporation and a member of the Pathways to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities Planning Committee, was in Yugoslavia and thus unable to attend. And Robert Silverstein and Pat Morrissey were unable to attend due to sudden pressing business related to the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Samples of the responses of the VIPs to the reports from the work groups follow:

Judy Wagner, Legislative Assistant, Senator Paul Simon.

"There is quite a bit of action on Capitol Hill right now in areas that can potentially have an impact on services and opportunities for people with learning disabilities. Among them are the literacy bill which includes a clearinghouse on literacy. This could have a major impact in providing clearinghouse services for people with learning disabilities."

Maureen West, Legislative Assistant, Senator Bob Dole.

"We would like to hear more from you. It would be great to have a more focused approach from people that could really give us what the needs are in regards to people with learning disabilities and with regards to the whole legislative process. You have your hearings, your subcommittee hearings, your full committee mark-ups. Bring your proposals up to staff. Your voice can be heard and you can have an impact all the way up to the last minute--even when the bill is brought up to the floor of Congress."

Maria Cuprill, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Select Education, U.S. House of Representatives.

"You have developed wonderful plans and given yourself lots of directions. You can impact on what's going on in our side of the world by developing those advocacy groups to go out there and to push for what you need. If you leave here and you don't come back to myself or someone else in my subcommittee and say 'Hey this is something that we need and we want to know how we can get it,' then the job is not going to be done."

Christine Lord, Professional Staff, Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, U.S. Senate.

"There are legislative proposals on Capitiol Hill which will enable more people with disabilities to purchase technology. For example, the Technology Act gives grants to the states to develop a technology infrastructure. Senator Hatch introduced a bill that would provide tax incentives for businesses to donate used equipment such as computers to non-profit agencies. This will help people with disabilities who are served by these agencies."

John Steger, Program Manager, IBM Corporation.

"What I heard are some really excellent ideas. What I fail to hear in a lot of the recommendations is the use of computers as a tool for people with disabilities. We have been saying in the corporation that for most people, computers can make things easier, but sometimes, for a person who has a disability, a computer can make things possible. We are just scratching the surface in the amount of software programming that can be done and made available to a person to enhance their abilities. If you provide an aid to a person with a disability sometimes, they can become employable."

Wilson Anderson, President, Orton Society.

"At the Menninger Center for Learning Disabilities in Kansas, we are trying to institute a diploma program for adults with language learning disabilities, in cooperation with other agencies, so they can earn their high school diploma. Our clientele dropped out of school and it doesn't make any difference that the GED is on tape for them. The GED possibility needs to be made known to the community colleges and the examiners need to implement Section 7 of the GED Examiner's Manual which mandates accommodation on the test."

Dale Brown, Program Manager, President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

"The President's Committee will be giving all of this input our full consideration. We have been charged with many task forces and projects, so the President's Committee will have to determine with all of you the best way that we can work together. However, I would like to encourage everyone not to look to Washington for solutions. Each of you as an individual can do a lot. Please follow up on any contacts made at this conference. I saw a lot of sparks flying at this conference. Let's fan those sparks of ideas into the flame of action."

Helene Gruber, Past-President, Learning Disabilities Association of America.

"It is very encouraging to hear the call for coalition and combined action among groups, because all the groups tend to operate rather autonomously. Clearly when we are talking about a disability that affects 10% of the population, no group is going to be able to do it all. We must work together."

After the VIP panel reacted, audience participation was encouraged. In one dramatic speech, Bud Collins, Associate Director of the De Paul School in Louisville, Kentucky, asked all people with learning disabilities to stand. Approximately a third of the participants stood up. "I want the panel here to see that we are real people. Unfortunately, because we have been made to feel like we are second rate human beings, we haven't always gone out and fought for ourselves, but this opportunity to get together has given me the courage to do things that I haven't before. And I'm going to take my candle from underneath the bush and let it shine." Collins was met with strong applause.

Sally Hedberg, a resource specialist from Orinda, California, explained, "I am on the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, and I will be going to a Disability and Employment Concerns Committee meeting after this panel. I will be taking this information to that committee. You should know that every single one of your states has a Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and most cities have local chapters. So you may want to get involved with them."

As moderator, Paul Gerber had the last words. "I feel very hopeful. There are a lot of adults with learning disabilities out there who are doing some amazing things in the workplace. However, there are a lot of missed opportunities too, and we have impressive numbers of adults with learning disabilities and their families depending on us.

"I think perhaps our charge as we leave the meeting today is employment of people with learning disabilities. I spoke of full employment, perhaps that is idealistic. But let's at least get under the national unemployment rate.

I think we have to keep this in perspective and realize that this meeting is just the beginning, and certainly, there are some very good things going on, but we simply have to look upon this as a beginning."

At the end of the panel, Dale Brown, representing Justin Dart, Chairman, President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, gave appreciation plaques to Paul J. Gerber, Chairman, Pathways to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities Conference and Carol A. Dowdy, Logistics Chairman, Pathways to Employment of People with Learning Disabilities.

APPENDICES

AGENDA

Pathways to Employment for People with Learning Disabilities

Monday, April 30, 1990

8:45 A.M. - 9:30 A.M.	Welcome Paul J. Gerber, Ph.D., Chairperson, Conference Introduction to the "Pathways Process" Dale Brown, Program Manager, Conference
9:30 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.	Constituency Groups - Brainstorm. (Task 1) ACTIVITY: Brainstorm issues on employment of people with learning disabilities on each topic from point of view of constituency. Members work as individuals for fifteen minutes and then each person speaks on his or her ideas.
10:30 A.M. - 10:40 A.M.	BREAK
10:40 A.M. - 11:40 P.M.	Multidisciplinary Teams - Brainstorm. (Task 2) ACTIVITY: Brainstorm issues for each topic. Consolidate issues toward end of session.
11:40 P.M. - 12:10 P.M.	Individual Work - Issue generation for other multidisciplinary teams. (Task 3) ACTIVITY: Each person reviews the other topics and writes issues and a solution for these topics.
12:10 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.	LUNCH
1:30 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.	Multidisciplinary Teams - Finalize and rank issues. (Task 4) ACTIVITY: Consider and synthesize issues received from Task 3. Then finalize issues into clear statements. Each issue should be as distinct as possible from the other issues. Then issues should be placed in priority order.

3:00 P.M. - 3:10 P.M.	BREAK
3:10 P.M. - 4:10 P.M.	Constituency Groups - Feedback. (Task 5) ACTIVITY: Each multidisciplinary team has representative request feedback on the highest priority issue on their topic from point of view of constituency.
4:10 P.M. - 4:30 P.M.	Tomorrow's Challenge.

Tuesday, May 1, 1990

8:30 A.M. - 10:15 A.M.	Multidisciplinary Teams - Develop recommendations (and possible "trigger mechanisms"). (Task 6) ACTIVITY: Each multidisciplinary team member reports on response from his or her constituency group on highest priority item. Multidisciplinary team develops action plan for each item. Also, the team looks at the topic as a whole to determine if there is one particular trigger mechanism -- a point within the system that must be changed before anything else can happen.
10:15 A.M. - 10: 30 A.M.	Multidisciplinary Teams - Develop final report. (Task 7) ACTIVITY: Each group picks a spokesperson to report on the action plan for the first priority issue. The spokesperson works with his or her group to prepare a presentation.
10:45 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.	BREAK
11:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.	VIP Panel - Each spokesperson reports on his or her action plan to the VIPs and the VIPs react to their recommendations.

TOPIC PAPERS

1. Work Preparation
   - 1.1 Education and Training Programs
   - 1.2 Rehabilitative Services
   - 1.3 Transition
2. Vocational Entry
3. Reasonable Accommodation
4. Job Advancement
5. Socioadaptability
6. Policy and Legislation
7. Attitudes
8. Definition and Diagnosis

1. Work Preparation

1.1 Education and Training Programs

This topic covers all education and training programs involved in work preparation of people with learning disabilities. Programs particularly for people with learning disabilities should be considered as well as programs for non-disabled people. Specific programs to be covered are high schools, colleges (both community and four year), professional and paraprofessional training, apprenticeships, trade schools and vocational schools, adult education, and training in the military.

Sample issues might be:

Students with learning disabilities entering colleges need better information regarding services and accommodations for people with learning disabilities.

Students with learning disabilities who have not received special education services often have difficulties receiving reasonable accommodation in the mainstream classroom.

Many adult basic education students have learning disabilities which are undiagnosed, yet there are very few states that have delivery systems which incorporate this population.

1.2 Rehabilitative Services

This topic should cover those services which directly and indirectly support vocational entry and adjustment for people with learning disabilities which are outside the realm of education. Included would be vocational rehabilitation services, Job Training Partnership Act programs, supported employment programs, and case management efforts to aid in gearing up for employability. Indirect services such as independent living programs, mental health services, and substance abuse programs should also be surveyed. The quality and responsiveness of these services, as well as a discussion of needed services which may not exist at present, should be thoroughly discussed.

Sample issues might be:

Many people with learning disabilities are refused eligibility from vocational rehabilitation on the grounds that their disabilities are not considered "severe" enough.

Changes in the legislation authorizing the Job Training Partnership Act emphasize serving people with low levels of basic skills. Much of this population may have learning disabilities, yet there is no provision in the law specific to serving learning disabilities.

Traditionally, supported employment services do not serve people with learning disabilities, yet the model can be helpful to many people from that population.

Many people with learning disabilities find that their learning disabilities are not treated when they are in mental health settings.

1.3 Transition

This topic covers the process of transition from one life adjustment period to another with a particular emphasis on the school-to-work transition. The effectiveness and efficiency of the system for this transition should be reviewed, including case management of people with learning disabilities, job placement, and interagency linkages. An effort should be made to identify the unique transition needs of people with learning disabilities.

Sample issues might be:

Best practices in the area of transition for people with learning disabilities need to be identified.

In some areas of the country, transition services for people with learning disabilities are close to nonexistent and need to be established.

Interagency cooperation is needed among varying agency services such as case management, job placement, and follow-up.

2. **Vocational Entry**

This topic should cover the entire process of job matching from the point of view of the applicant with a learning disability and the employer attempting to hire the most qualified candidate for each position. Issues covered from the point of view of the applicant would include educational preparation needed for effective job seeking, methods of job seeking (such as responding to advertisements; employment agencies; and networking), filling out job applications, screening and finalist job interviews, and final selection. Issues covered from the employer's viewpoint include analysis of each position to determine essential job functions, barriers to nondiscrimination against people with learning disabilities, coverage of people with learning disabilities in affirmative action programs, and financial incentives and disincentives to hiring people with learning disabilities. The needs, obligations, and perspectives of employers regarding the use of people with learning disabilities as employees should be considered.

Sample issues might be:

Pre-employment examinations should effectively test essential job functions without discriminating against people with learning disabilities.

Applicants with learning disabilities need to determine whether they will disclose their disabilities and, if they do disclose them, the best way of doing so. Some applicants report that it is essential to be honest, others report that it causes them to become the recipient of unnecessary discrimination.

There is a need for people with learning disabilities to be prepared to effectively seek work. This preparation should include the practical aspects of job seeking such as application and interviews as well as such psychosocial issues as being willing to compete with others and accepting rejection with self-esteem intact.

Employers find that people with learning disabilities are not considered covered by various programs for "handicaps." For example, many of them cannot get certified through vocational rehabilitation for targeted job tax credits.

A research program is needed to determine the incidence of unemployment and underemployment in the general population.

3. **Reasonable Accommodations**

This topic should cover possible ways of accommodating people with learning disabilities in the work force, to what extent these accommodations are being made, and what needs to occur to increase the amount and effectiveness of people with learning disabilities. Included should be environmental accommodations such as changes in lighting and computer peripherals and software; workload accommodations such as excusing the person from nonessential tasks and job restructuring; and managerial accommodations such as more care in communicating instructions or more frequent performance appraisals. The employment process should be thoroughly reviewed, including job application, orientation of new employees, daily work, workload balancing, performance appraisal, and training. The needs, obligations, and perspectives of employers regarding the use of people with learning disabilities as employees should be considered.

Sample issues might be:

Responsibility for financing particular accommodations, such as computer software enhancements, needs to be better defined.

Many people with learning disabilities find they face more resistance to accommodation for their disabilities than is faced by people with obvious disabilities. Employers need to be educated regarding the validity of these requests.

Research is needed on validity and reliability of test results when accommodations such as waiving time limitations are made.

Many accommodations for people with learning disabilities require time and management skills on the part of the direct supervisors. Supervisors may lack the skills or the motivation for engaging in this extra effort.

4. **Job Advancement**

This topic should cover the process of promotion from one job to another from the point of view of the applicant with a learning disability and the employer attempting to select the most qualified candidate for each position. Issues from the point of view of the employee might include training needs, social skills, marketing one's work abilities, and time management. From the employer's point of view, issues might include analysis of each position to determine essential job functions, barriers to nondiscrimination against people with learning disabilities, in-house training programs, and the efficacy of career paths for various types of employees. Concerns should span from the first promotion from entry level to a more advanced job to entering top management of a corporation. Movement from one job to another one on the same level (lateral transfers) should also be discussed. Formal processes such as job postings and informal processes such as mentoring should be discussed. The needs, obligations, and perspectives of employers regarding the use of people with learning disabilities as employers should be considered.

Sample issues might be:

Stereotypes of people with learning disabilities may make advancement difficult and a strategy is needed to counteract these problems.

Teamwork and the ability to get along with others become more essential as one moves up within an organization. Yet social-skills deficits have been found to be a manifestation of some learning disabilities.

Reasonable accommodation needs change as jobs change and many disability-related issues need to be addressed and readdressed by both employer and employee.

5. **Socioadaptability**

This topic should cover the relationship between the person with a learning disability and the other people within their social network. Included should be such issues as personal responsibility of the person with learning disabilities, social skills, the effect of the learning disability on adolescent and adult development, and subtle accommodations that may be needed on the part of supervisors and social-service personnel.

Sample issues might be:

Many people with learning disabilities require nontraditional job accommodations such as more frequent performance feedback from their supervisor, or flexible hours. They may also have difficulty expressing their needs for such accommodations in a way that communicates well with their supervisors and top management.

Research into the effect of learning disabilities on adolescent and adult development has been minimal. There is a need for better information on successful and unsuccessful adaptations to the workplace. This information is needed to develop concepts and models of intermittent support, retooling efforts, and counseling to assist people with learning disabilities in overcoming vocational stumbling blocks.

Many people with learning disabilities who have difficulties with social skills do not recognize their own difficulties. Strategies for assisting this population need to be developed.

6. **Policy and Legislation**

This topic should include a review of legislative mandates affecting the area of disability. Included should be legislation which is in effect and legislation which should be anticipated. Particular attention should be paid to the Carl Perkins Act, Job Training Partnership Act, the Rehabilitation Act, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act, and the anticipated Americans With Disabilities Act. The legislation and regulations should be included.

Sample issues might be:

Although specific learning disabilities are included in the regulations for the Rehabilitation Act, in many states people with learning disabilities are being told that they cannot be served.

Each legislative mandate has its own definition of disability, obligation, and objective. On the state and federal levels, this can be a disincentive to interagency coordination.

The Job Training Partnership Act is being changed to emphasize training people who are deficient in basic skills. Most likely there are many people who have learning disabilities who will be served and diagnosis and treatment strategies should be developed and implemented for this population.

How will the American With Disabilities Act affect the community of people with learning disabilities?

7. **Attitudes**

The topic "attitudes" covers the awareness and knowledge about disability among those people who have the potential to assist people with learning disabilities to find jobs and be successful in achieving their work objectives. This includes the attitudes of educators, employers, vocational rehabilitation personnel, and families of people with learning disabilities. Both the attitudes toward disabilities in general and the attitudes of people with learning disabilities should be included.

Sample issues might be:

Efforts must be made to ameliorate discrimination against people with learning disabilities. Many people with learning disabilities feel that employers underestimate their potential, both in terms of hiring decisions and job assignments.

Co-workers need to be included in education about learning disabilities, as co-workers can be discriminatory.

The confusion between learning disabilities, mental retardation, and mental illness needs to be addressed.

8. **Definition and Diagnosis**

The topic "definition and diagnosis" should cover all difficulties: in proving that one has learning disabilities, in gaining eligibility to service programs, or in gaining reasonable accommodations in education programs or during employment. Service delivery systems to be surveyed could include secondary and postsecondary education programs, Job Training Partnership Act, vocational rehabilitation services for people with blindness, and adult education.

Sample issues might be:

An analysis needs to be made regarding the inherent strengths and weaknesses of categorical vs. non-categorical services and programming involved in employment of people with learning disabilities.

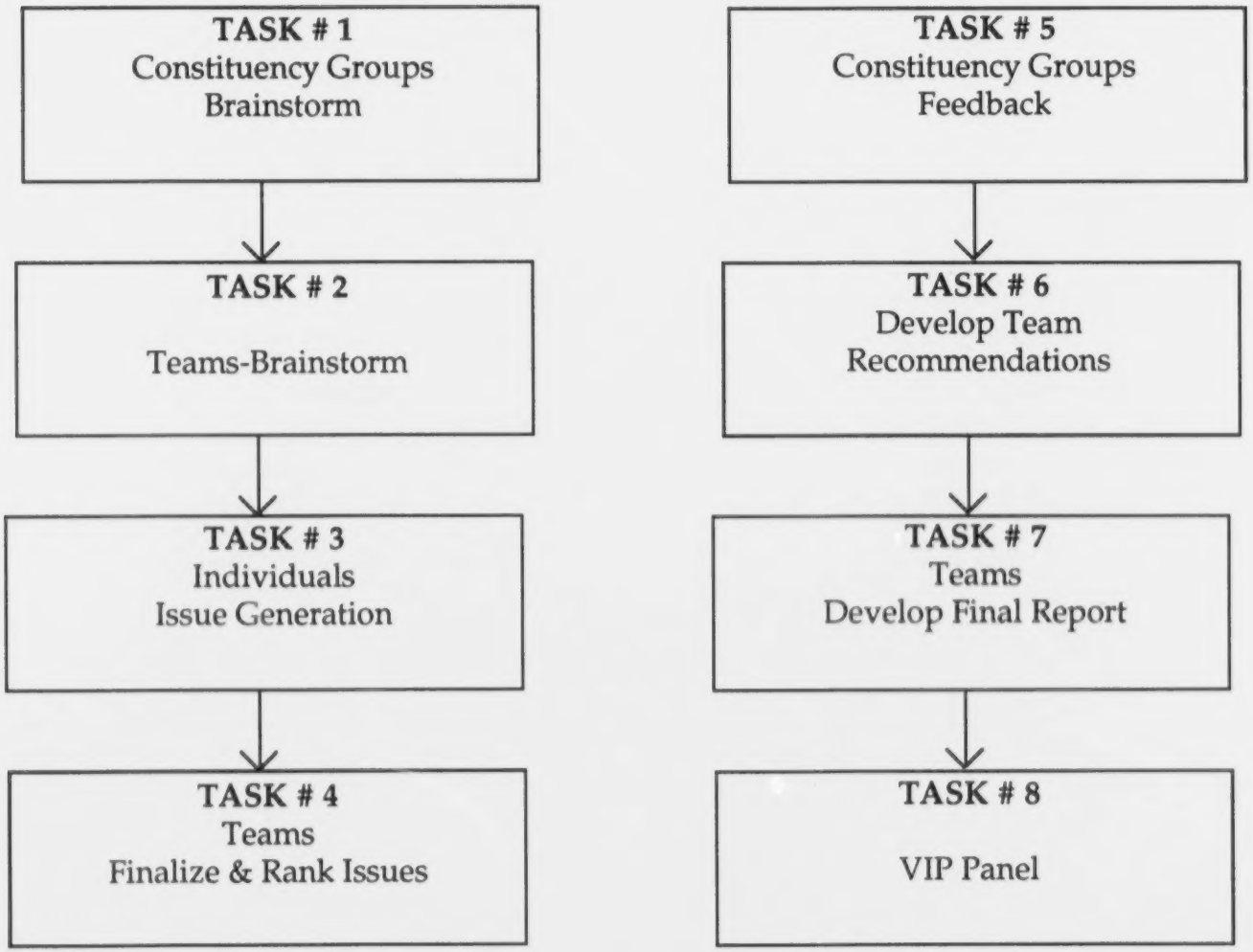
People with learning disabilities often have difficulty documenting their disabilities for the purpose of job accommodation.

Some service delivery systems do not typically or traditionally serve people with learning disabilities. Their definitions of learning disabilities may be needlessly inclusive or exclusive.

A research program is needed to develop a definition of learning disabilities and to define various subtypes.

"PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT"

Work Sheets



Task #1 Constituency Groups

Brainstorm

Brainstorm issues on employment of people with learning disabilities on each topic from point of view of constituency. Members work as individuals for fifteen minutes and then each person speaks on his/her ideas.

Individual Work	Group Notes
62	
66	67

Task #1 (Cont'd.)

Individual Work	Group Notes

Task #2 Teams

Brainstorm

Brainstorm issues for each topic. Consolidate issues towards end of session.

Brainstorm Issues	Consolidated List

Task #3 Individual Issue Generation

Topic No.

An issue to consider
(only one issue per page)

A possible solution to issue

Task #4 Teams

Finalize and rank issues

Consider and synthesize issues received from Task 3. Then finalize issues into clear statements. Each issue should be as distinct as possible from the other issues. Then issues should be placed in priority order.

New Issues	Final List

Task #5 Constituency Groups

Feedback

Each multidisciplinary team has representatives request feedback on the highest priority issue from the point of view of their constituency.

Feedback on highest priority area.

Task #6 Teams

Develop recommendations (and possible "trigger mechanisms").

Each multidiscplinary team member reports on response from his/her constituency group on highest priority item.
Multidisciplinary team develops action plan for each item. Also, the team looks at the topic as a whole to determine if there is one particular trigger mechanism - a point within the system that must be changed before anything else can happen.

LIST ISSUE #1	LIST ISSUE #2	LIST ISSUE #3
RECOMMENDED ACTION	RECOMMENDED ACTION	RECOMMENDED ACTION
(who, what, how, and by when)	(who, what, how, and by when)	(who, what, how, and by when)

"Trigger Mechanism"

Task #6 Teams (Cont'd.)

Develop recommendations (and possible "trigger mechanisms").

Each multidiscplinary team member reports on response from his/her constituency group on highest priority item. Multidisciplinary team develops action plan for each item. Also, the team looks at the topic as a whole to determine if there is one particular trigger mechanism - a point within the system that must be changed before anything else can happen.

LIST ISSUE #4	LIST ISSUE #5	LIST ISSUE #6
RECOMMENDED ACTION (who, what, how, and by when)	RECOMMENDED ACTION (who, what, how, and by when)	RECOMMENDED ACTION (who, what, how, and by when)
80		81

"Trigger Mechanism"

Task #7 Teams

Develop Final Reports

Each group picks a spokesperson to report on the action plan for the first priority issue. The spokespersons work with their groups to prepare a presentation.

"PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES"

INVITATION SCHEME

Target Audience: 120

Invitations to be sent to reach target: 200

Number of group facilitators to be identified: 12 (or one per ten attendees)

EDUCATORS (50)

Secondary regular educators who have taught LD students

Vocational Educators
- Regular
- Special
- Trade school

Special Educators

Higher Educators
- College
- Graduate School
- Community colleges

Transition Specialists

Adult Educators
- GED
- ABE
- Literacy tutors

Administrators
- School Principals
- State Directors of Special Education

BUSINESS, INDUSTRY & UNION REPRESENTATIVES (40)

Large Business
- Personnel
- EEO
- In-house training
- Supervisors and managers
- Legal

Small Business

Unions

Trade Associations
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- National Association of Manufactures
- Society for Human Resource Management

HELPING PROFESSIONALS (30)

Vocational Rehabilitation
- Counselors
- Administrators
- Supported employment representatives

Doctors

Psychologists

Social Workers

Counselors
- Employment counselors
- Guidance counselors
- Other

Administrators
- School Principals
- State Directors of Special Education

CONSUMERS (50)

LD Adults
- Competitively employed
- Not yet employed or marginally employed
- Former VR clients
- Former Special Education students
- College or graduate school students

Family Members
- Parents
- Spouses
- Siblings

Advocacy Group Representatives

POLICY OFFICIALS IN THE FIELD OF DISABILITY (30)

Mayor's Committees on employment of people with disabilities

Staff of U.S. Congress

Staff of Executive Agencies
- Department of Education
- Rehabilitation Services Administration
- Handicapped Program Managers
- Selective Placement Officials

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April 30 - May 1, 1990

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